THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) to (c) Government is not aware of any such incident occurring on 25th September, 2002.

However, on 18th September, 2002 102 Indian fishermen and 25 trawlers were apprehended by Pesalai, District Mannar Fishermen Cooperative Society for allegedly poaching in Sri Lankan waters. Upon immediate intervention by the Government of India through our High Commission in Colombo the fishermen were released on 20th September, 2002.

Issuance of passports to Indians in Italy

287. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons claiming to be Indians who were issued "authority slips" by Indian missions in Rome and Milan since June, 2002 to the 8th November, 2002;

(b) the number of such cases referred back to PIOs in India for clearances in India including authority slip receivers and duplicate passport seekers; and

(c) the break up of cases cleared by PIOs Jalandhar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Bareilly and Jaipur and number of passports issued by Indian missions on the basis of clearance notes alongwith the number of pending cases and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) During the period 1st June—8th November, 2002, a total of 3429 persons claiming to be Indian citizens have been issued authority slips by our Embassy in Rome and 1223 such persons have been issued authority slips by our Consulate in Milan.

(b) All these cases have been referred to the concerned Passport Issuing Offices. Out of the 3429 authority slip receivers in Rome, 3298 cases were referred to the Passport Issuing Authorities in India. The remaining cases pertain to our Embassies / Consulates abroad. All the 1223 cases received in the Indian Consulate in Milan have been referred back to PIOs in India.

(c) The details in respect to the PIOs is as follows:

Passport Office, Jalandhar	
Total cases received:	2432
Clearances sent:	1660
Cases pending:	772
Regional Passport Office, Chandigarh	
Total cases received:	1740
Clearances sent:	960
Cases pending:	780
Regional Passport Office, Delhi	
Total cases received:	54
Clearances sent:	36
Cases pending:	18
Passport Office, Bareilly	
Total case received:	49
Clearances sent:	43
Cases pending:	6
Regional Passport Office, Jaipur	
Total cases received:	106
Clearances sent:	106
Cases pending:	Nil

Our missions in Rome and Milan have issued passports to 105 and 482 persons respectively on the basis of clearances received. Out of a total of 4381 cases received by the above five passport offices 2805 clearances have been sent. 1576 cases are pending because of incorrect passport particulars given by the applicants. In the absence of correct passport particulars, the national status of the applicants is being ascertained from state governments and concerned police authorities.